



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**UNDERSTANDING OF TEACHING AND ITS MANIFESTATION
AMONG EXCELLENT EDUCATORS IN A SELECTED PUBLIC
UNIVERSITY**

HASNAH BINTI ABDULLAH.

FPP 2005 27

**UNDERSTANDING OF TEACHING AND ITS MANIFESTATION AMONG
EXCELLENT EDUCATORS IN A SELECTED PUBLIC UNIVERSITY**

By

HASNAH BINTI ABDULLAH

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies,
Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree
of Doctor of Philosophy.**

JUNE 2005



DEDICATION

To my family.
and those who have given overwhelming support to completion of this study.

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of the Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**UNDERSTANDING OF TEACHING AND ITS MANIFESTATION AMONG
EXCELLENT EDUCATORS IN A SELECTED PUBLIC UNIVERSITY**

By

HASNAH BINTI ABDULLAH

June 2005

Chairman : Professor Turiman Suandi, PhD

Faculty : Educational Studies

The research was conducted to explore the understanding of teaching of excellent educators at a selected public university. Three research questions guided the study; first, what do educators believe to be the purpose of education?, second, what facilitated the understanding of teaching development?, and third, how is the understanding of teaching adhered to, manifested in their teaching practice?

The study employed qualitative multiple case study approach to answer the research questions. The primary data were collected through in depth interviews and the secondary data were collected through observations in the classroom,

laboratory and discussion sessions after lectures. The analysis of this study were done through within-case analysis and cross-case analysis. The within-case analysis explained in detail the finding from excellent educators which were carried out individually. Meanwhile, the cross-case analysis explained the findings generally from the four excellent educators.

The study discovered that the purposes of education according to the excellent educators were for change, transmitting of knowledge, and character building. Change in this context was seen with reference to the individual and societal development. It becomes the responsibility for a person who holds the knowledge to, then transmit and thus share the knowledge with others – to students directly or indirectly. The knowledge transmitted must be congruent with the behaviour of the transmitter. Education was seen as a means to shape positive behaviour.

Respondents' backgrounds as well as understanding of learning and teaching concepts had contributed to the development of their understanding of teaching. The learning concept was to boost knowledge and appropriate application of the obtained knowledge. The teaching concepts discovered were to transmit knowledge. Teaching was also seen as a means for them to change students' paradigm towards knowledge and its uses. However, the conceptions of learning and teaching towards adult students were slightly different. Learning was seen as a means to understand and make meaning of the new and previous knowledge

while teaching was seen as a means to transmit knowledge and to increase students' knowledge. The purpose of education, respondents' background and learning and teaching conceptions have shaped their understanding of teaching. The adhered understanding of teaching was manifested in their teaching. These can be observed through their preparation and openness to assist students. Their teaching roles as experts and organizers were reflected in their teaching. They have been a major source of reference for their students as well as the society at large.

The study recommended that comparisons between other institutes of learning be made with the end result of reaping the best from every quarter. This concept should be expanded to others, other than the educators, that is, to include managers, politician and the world at large.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**KEFAHAMAN PENGAJARAN DAN MANIFESTASI PENDIDIK CEMERLANG
UNIVERSITI AWAM TERPILIH**

Oleh

HASNAH BINTI ABDULLAH

Jun 2005

Pengerusi : Profesor Turiman Suandi, PhD

Fakulti : Pengajian Pendidikan

Kajian kualitatif ini mengkaji kefahaman pengajaran dalam kalangan pendidik cemerlang di salah sebuah universiti awam di Malaysia. Tiga persoalan kajian telah dijadikan panduan untuk kajian ini; pertama, apakah tujuan pendidikan dari perspektif pendidik cemerlang?, kedua, apakah faktor-faktor yang telah membantu pembentukan kefahaman pengajaran pendidik cemerlang? dan bagaimanakah kefahaman pengajaran yang dimiliki dimanifestasikan ke dalam aktiviti pengajaran?

Kajian kes kualitatif ini menggunakan teknik pelbagaian untuk mendapatkan jawapan kepada persoalan-persoalan kajian. Pengumpulan data utama adalah melalui temubual secara mendalam dan pengumpulan data juga dibuat melalui

pemerhatian di dalam bilik kuliah, makmal dan sesi perbincangan selepas kuliah. Dapatan kajian diperolehi dengan menggunakan dua teknik iaitu analisis kes dalaman dan analisis bersilang. Analisis kes dalaman menghuraikan dapatan dari pendidik cemerlang yang dikaji secara individu. Analisis bersilang pula menghuraikan dapatan secara menyeluruh perbandingan empat orang pendidik cemerlang.

Kajian ini mendapati matlamat pendidikan adalah untuk menjana perubahan, pemindahan ilmu dan untuk membina tingkahlaku. Perubahan yang dimaksudkan adalah perubahan di peringkat individu dan juga masyarakat. Kajian juga menemui bahawa seseorang yang berilmu adalah bertanggungjawab untuk memindahkan ilmu atau berkongsi ilmu tersebut kepada orang lain, dalam konteks ini adalah kepada pelajar. Pemindahan ilmu ini mestilah selari dengan perbuatan dan tingkah laku. Pendidikan juga dilihat sebagai dapat membantu kepada pembentukan tingkahlaku yang positif.

Kehidupan responden semenjak daripada kecil hinggalah ke peringkat universiti, serta kefahaman terhadap konsep pembelajaran dan pengajaran telah menyumbang kepada pembentukan kefahaman pengajaran mereka. Konsep pembelajaran responden adalah untuk menambahkan ilmu pengetahuan dan mengaplikasikan ilmu pengetahuan yang diperolehi apabila diperlukan. Kajian ini juga mendapati konsep pengajaran responden adalah untuk menyampaikan ilmu pengetahuan dan maklumat dan untuk mengubah cara pelajar melihat dan

mengaplikasikan ilmu pengetahuan yang mereka miliki. Walau bagaimanapun konsep pembelajaran dan pengajaran mereka agak berbeza terhadap pelajar dewasa di mana pembelajaran dianggap sebagai kaedah untuk memahami dan memberi makna terhadap maklumat baru dan lama, manakala pengajaran pula dianggap sebagai kaedah penyampaian maklumat dan untuk membantu penambahan ilmu di kalangan pelajar. Matlamat pendidikan, biografi dan kefahaman konsep pembelajaran dan pengajaran responden telah membentuk kefahaman pengajaran mereka. Kefahaman pengajaran yang mereka miliki telah dimanifestasikan dalam pengajaran mereka melalui beberapa cara seperti menunjukkan sikap kesediaan dan keterbukaan untuk membantu pelajar dalam proses pengajaran dan pembelajaran. Sebagai pakar dalam bidang tertentu, mereka bukan sahaja menjadi rujukan kepada pelajar dan masyarakat tetapi juga sebagai perancang dalam menyusunatur kepada proses pembelajaran dan pengajaran.

Secara keseluruhannya, kajian ini menjelaskan tentang kefahaman pengajaran yang dianuti oleh pendidik-pendidik cemerlang dan seterusnya mencadangkan agar kajian dilaksanakan di institusi pengajian lain untuk melihat perbezaan dan persamaan terhadap kefahaman pengajaran dalam kalangan pendidik cemerlang. Dapatan kajian ini juga dapat memberikan beberapa garis panduan bagi pengamal pendidikan lain dan institusi pendidikan untuk memperkasakan pendidikan di Malaysia.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation belongs to many and without their support it would never have been completed. I would like to thank my advisory committee members – Prof. Dr Turiman Suandi (Department of Professional Development and Continuing Education), Prof. Dr Azimi Hamzah (Institute of Agriculture Extension), Dr. Habsah Ismail (Educational Studies) and Prof. Dr Sidek Baba (International Islamic University, Malaysia) – for their guidance, encouragement, understanding and support throughout this research. I would like to thank Dr Mazalan Khamis for his continuous guidance and support.

Special thanks to all participants for their cooperation during the interviews and observation sessions. I have learnt a lot from them which I consider very precious. The time they have spent was very invaluable.

Finally thanks to my supportive husband Mr Noor Azam Abd Aziz. Thanks for the many lunch-hour drives to the library and anywhere on earth and for understanding my desire to complete this study. Thanks to my children Muhammad, Ibrahim, Anwar, Aishah, Faiz, Zulaikha, Hafsah, Luqman and Masyitah. Not forgetting, my son Ahmad for being with me for a while in this world. Allah loves you more. Thanks to most of my family members for being very supportive in times of sadness and laughter.

For Kak No Hayati and Rabaah, I will never forget the support you have provided and to Angeline and Kak Rohana, thanks a million for giving me confidence and helping me with the editing work.

I certify that an Examination Committee met on 20th June 2005 to conduct the final examination of Hasnah binti Abdullah on her Doctor of Philosophy thesis entitled "Understanding of Teaching and its Manifestation among Excellent Educators in a Selected Public University" in accordance with Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Act 1980 and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Regulations 1981. The Committee recommends that the candidate be awarded the relevant degree. Members of the Examination Committee are as follows:

Abu Daud Silong, PhD

Professor
Faculty of Educational Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Chairman)

Maimunah Ismail, PhD

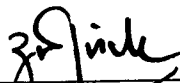
Professor
Faculty of Educational Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Internal Examiner)

Abdul Rahman Md. Aroff, PhD

Professor
Faculty of Educational Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Internal Examiner)

Sharan Merriam, PhD

Professor
Department of Adult Education
University of Georgia
Athens
(External Examiner)



ZAKARIAH ABDUL RASHID, PhD
Professor/Deputy Dean
School of Graduate Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date: **22 AUG 2005**

The thesis submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and was accepted as fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The Committee of Supervisory are as follows:

Turiman Suandi, PhD

Professor
Department of Professional Development and Continuing Education
Faculty of Educational Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Chairman)

Azimi Hamzah, PhD

Professor
Institute of Agriculture Extension
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)

Habsah Ismail, PhD

Faculty of Educational Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)

Sidek Baba, PhD

Professor
Kuliyyah of Education
International Islamic University of Malaysia
(Member)



AINI IDERIS, PhD
Professor/Dean
Sekolah Pengajian Siswazah
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date: 08 SEP 2005

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at Universiti Putra Malaysia or other institutions.



HASNAH BINTI ABDULLAH

Date: 20/8/05

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | Page |
|--|-------------|
| DEDICATION | ii |
| ABSTRACT | iii |
| ABSTRAK | vi |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | ix |
| APPROVAL | xi |
| DECLARATION | xiii |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS | xiv |
| LIST OF TABLES | xvii |
| LIST OF FIGURES | xviii |
| | |
| CHAPTER | |
| | |
| I INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| Background of the Study | 1 |
| Higher Education in Malaysia | 6 |
| Problem Statement | 9 |
| Significance of the Study | 11 |
| Scope of Study | 12 |
| Definition of Terms | 13 |
| Limitations of the Study | 13 |
| | |
| II LITERATURE REVIEW | 15 |
| Introduction | 15 |
| Philosophy | 15 |
| Educational Philosophy | 19 |
| Purpose of Education | 24 |
| Developing Philosophy of Life | 32 |
| Teaching Philosophy | 34 |
| Teaching Theories | 40 |
| University Teaching | 46 |
| Excellent Educators | 51 |
| Summary | 59 |
| | |
| III METHODOLOGY | 60 |
| Introduction | 60 |
| Design of the Study | 60 |
| Sample Selection | 63 |
| Data Collection | 65 |
| Primary Data Collection: Interview | 66 |
| Secondary Data Collection: Observation | 70 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Data Analysis | 72 |
| Validity and Reliability | 75 |
| IV FINDINGS | 79 |
| Introduction | 79 |
| Within-case Analysis | 80 |
| Participant A (Mr. A) | 81 |
| Background | 81 |
| Achievements and Contributions | 82 |
| The Purpose of Education | 84 |
| Facilitating Factors to Understanding of Teaching Development | 89 |
| Manifestation of the Understanding of Teaching | 92 |
| Participant B (Mr. B) | 97 |
| Background | 97 |
| Achievements and Contributions | 98 |
| The Purpose of Education | 100 |
| Facilitating Factors to Understanding of Teaching Development | 106 |
| Manifestation of the Understanding of Teaching | 111 |
| Participant C (Mr. C) | 114 |
| Background | 114 |
| Achievements and Contributions | 118 |
| The Purpose of Education | 112 |
| Facilitating Factors to Understanding of Teaching Development | 122 |
| Manifestation of the Understanding of Teaching | 124 |
| Participant D (Mr. D) | 128 |
| Background | 128 |
| Achievements and Contributions | 130 |
| The Purpose of Education | 131 |
| Facilitating Factors to Understanding of Teaching Development | 134 |
| Manifestation of the Understanding of Teaching | 138 |
| Summary | 142 |
| Cross-case Analysis | 143 |
| The Purpose of Education | 143 |
| To Advocate Change | 144 |
| To Transmit Knowledge | 146 |
| To Build Character | 148 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| Summary | 150 |
| Facilitating Factors to Understanding of Teaching Development | 152 |
| Personal Background | 152 |
| Personal Concepts | 157 |
| Summary | 166 |
| Manifestation of the Understanding of Teaching | 168 |
| Teaching Qualities | 168 |
| Teaching Roles | 180 |
| Summary | 186 |
| V SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS | 188 |
| Introduction | 188 |
| Summary | 188 |
| Methodology | 189 |
| Findings | 190 |
| Conclusions and Discussions | 194 |
| The Purpose of Education | 195 |
| Factors Facilitated the Understanding of Teaching Development | 203 |
| Manifestation of the Understanding of Teaching | 210 |
| Implication for Theory and Practice | 214 |
| Recommendations | 215 |
| REFERENCES | 217 |
| APPENDICES | 227 |
| VITA | 234 |

LIST OF TABLE

| Table | Page |
|-------------------------|------|
| 1. Respondents' Summary | 80 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| Figure | Page |
|--|------|
| 1. A Model of Teacher Thought and Action | 46 |
| 2. Purpose of Education | 151 |
| 3. Facilitating Factors to Understanding of Teaching Development | 167 |
| 4. Understanding of Teaching of Excellent Educators | 187 |

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Education plays an important role in society, and many people devote their lives to teaching. Teaching, for Palmer (1998), requires courage. For Grasha (1996), it is understood in terms of style. For Boyer (1990), it is scholarship. For Angelo and Cross (1993), it must be assessed. For Weimer (1990), it is only developed through careful and ongoing reflection. For some, it is a task. But, for Worley (2001), it is a charge, a challenge, and a choice because teaching remains a duty to be fulfilled, a delight to be enjoyed, a discipline to be embraced and a decision to be repeatedly made with each entrance into the classroom. It is not only a word but teaching requires appreciation by educators.

Therefore, teaching, education and learning are closely related and are complement each other. For the purpose of this study, the people who are involved in teaching are called as educators. They educate other people through teaching and learning process as teaching is an ever-learning experience. They are the people who can give great impact to the development of one's

personality, intellect, emotion and physics. Many have asserted that educators play important roles in many aspects. The importance of an educator emphasized by Langgulung (1986) is that one is not considered highly educated if he has not been guided by an educator even though he has read many books as references. The knowledge obtained from reading books will be better explained and discussed with guidance. With the present situation, there are claims that advancement of technology have taken certain important roles of teaching. One can obtain a degree without having to attend or be present at a university campus. Traditional learning, with the presence of an educator is still relevant and its importance cannot be denied. Despite, technology advancement, this is no excuse for neglecting the importance of the educator and his work.

The role of an educator is complex. According to Langgulung (1983), firstly, an educator must know the purpose of education. It is to enable the child to actualize the divine qualities in him which are bestowed by Allah for his benefit and for the benefit of mankind. In addition, an educator also has to sustain certain moral values and simultaneously show his skills as an instructor, a manager, a human relation and mental health worker, a scholar and a parent figure. There are multiple roles that educators play in educating his students: by recognizing and acknowledging the students' potentialities, respecting their questions and ideas and heightening their expectations and anticipations. Meanwhile, Worley (2001) stated that three elements that made-up an

outstanding educator are the philosophy of teaching, conceptual or ideological foundation that underlies the philosophy of teaching and the people who have been most important in shaping and guiding teaching.

The importance of an educator within the educational system is expressed earlier by Lauwery (1979) as:

"The strength of an education system must largely depend upon the quality of its teachers. However, enlightened the aims, however up-to-date and generous equipment, however efficient the administration, the value to the children is determined by the teachers. There is therefore no more important matter than of securing a sufficient supply of the right kind of people to the profession, providing them with the best possible training and ensuring to them a status and esteem commensurate with the importance and responsibility of their work"(pg. 35).

In addition to the above mentioned statement, the quality and the effectiveness of educators are also significant to the academic success of the students (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Darling Hammond, Wise and Klien, 1999). Analyzing these premises, it is also undeniable that educators play an important role in assisting the development of the society at large. Simultaneously, it is also important to ensure the quality of educators we are having as Nik Azis (1994) has asserted that quality education requires quality educators. These will enable the country to expedite the national education aspiration as expressed in the National Philosophy of Education (NPE) in 1986 (Tajul and Nor'Ain, 2002).

In general, quality education requires quality educators in order to produce high quality and qualified students. Al-Attas, a contemporary Islamic thinker, for example, emphasizes that educators need to be competent in their field as well as have good and consistent moral conduct in order to become quality educators (Mohd Nor, 1998). The Minister of Higher Education, emphasized that educators are an important component to the realization of the national education aspiration (Keynote Speech, SKPG 2004). The work of teaching is complex and it is not everybody who can teach as Aristotle made this observation (cited in Shulman, 2004):

We regard master-craftsmen as superior not merely because they have a grasp of theory and know the reasons for acting as they do. Broadly speaking, what distinguishes the man who knows from the ignorant man is an ability to teach, and this is why we hold that art and not experience has the character of genuine knowledge (episteme) – namely, that artists can teach and others (i.e., those who have not acquired an art by study but have merely picked up some skill empirically) cannot. (p. 197)

It is the educators who decide what is to be taught, who should be taught, how it should be taught and for what purpose. They can use common sense, which is obtained from years of experience or through observations, when making these decisions (Apps, 1973). However, the decision which is made based on common sense is vacillate from one situation to another and from time to time (Apps,

1973). Another setback of making decision based on common sense is that it is not applicable for long-term and broader educational policy (Apps, 1973). Fitzgibbons (1981) asserted that educators are required to make intelligent and fully informed decisions. Therefore decisions made based on common sense are not intelligent and fully informed decisions.

Arends, Winitzky, and Tennabaum (1998) claimed that educators are faced with hundreds of immediate daily decisions and in order to do so, educators must have knowledge and understanding of the issue concerned and its relation with the educational theory. Without the knowledge and understanding, the decisions will not be intelligent ones but will lack information. Therefore, an understanding of educational theory is an advantage for intelligent decision making and is essential for all educators.

An alternative to better decision making, educators base their decisions on their beliefs because beliefs are fundamental to the decision making process (Fitzgibbons, 1981) and will be reflected in their teaching. The beliefs can be either self examined or through research will make the educators question their personal teaching practice and finally lead to understanding of the practice.

Higher Education in Malaysia

In educational settings universities sit at the zenith or known better as the “ivory tower” by the society. There are more universities in the country now than ten years ago. The burgeoning number of universities, be it public or private has provided more opportunities for those who are qualified to pursue their tertiary education. Public higher education takes the form of college education, polytechnic education and university education. There are at least fifteen public universities to date and at least ten private universities and four foreign university branch campuses (Education Guide Malaysia, 2002). In addition there is an international university namely International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) which was established in Malaysia in 1983. Its establishment was inspired by the recommendation of the First World Conference on Muslim Education in Makkah in 1973.

In the past, universities were places destined for the elite class but in the present society, universities are “the nurseries of the next generation’s brain” (The Economist, 2002). This reflected the significant role of the higher education institutions and essential for the economic growth as well as the social growth of the nation. The main purpose of higher education in this country is to produce a competent workforce equipped with the skill, knowledge, attitude and behaviour to meet the demands of the information technology era (Education Guide